

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2021

The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write to express our disappointment in learning that you are significantly cutting the size of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, Migration, and International Economic Policy. For far too long, in general, our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere have been neglected compared to other regions of the world. Sadly, your decision to reduce Member spots on the Subcommittee by almost half reflects this neglect and we strongly urge you to reconsider and return the ratio of the Subcommittee back to eight Democrat seats and six Republican seats as it was in the 116th Congress.

As a long-time Member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I am sure you recognize that these are challenging times for our neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disastrous impact here: Mexico and Brazil are among the top five countries with the highest [global death tolls](#); and other countries including Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Peru have been significantly impacted as well. The pandemic is also taking an unprecedented economic toll which threatens to destabilize the region and increase illegal migration to the United States from the countries of Central America. Such a major reduction of Members dedicated to this Subcommittee will hinder the Foreign Affairs Committee's ability to best guide U.S. assistance to help respond to the ongoing crisis. Further, any perceived lack of attention to the region could be used by U.S. adversaries like China, Russia, and the region's criminal groups to help undermine U.S. interests.

The region also continues to face threats from the brutal socialist-communist dictatorships in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. We know all too well how fragile the democracies of the region are and the Subcommittee must have sufficient representation to oversee U.S. policy so it can best help ensure that the House of Representatives stands up to these murderous dictators, supports human rights, and provides the necessary assistance to the brave democratic actors that risk their lives for freedom and democracy.

House Democrats have said consistently that they want to address the drivers of illegal migration from Central America, support renewable energy in the Caribbean, and "repair" the relationships with the region that they claim have been damaged by the previous administration. However, reducing the number of seats on the Subcommittee does not reflect those sentiments. In fact, it only sends a message to our regional partners that their interests and our relationships with them are not as important as those of other regions. We strongly reject this message.

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With all the ongoing and anticipated challenges facing our partners in the Western Hemisphere, it is clearly not the time for the lead authorizing Subcommittee in Congress to show any signs of disengagement. As such, we once again urge you to revert to the ratios of the 116th Congress. Thank you for your attention to this and we look forward to working with you in the 117th Congress on the various challenges facing America in our dynamic world.

Respectfully,



MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR
Member of Congress



YOUNG KIM
Member of Congress



PETER MEIJER
Member of Congress



AUGUST PFLUGER
Member of Congress



NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS
Member of Congress



RONNY JACKSON
Member of Congress